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NOFORN/CONTINUED CONTROL

CURRENT SUPPORT MEMORANDUM

INCREASED CONSTRUCTION OF AIR RAID SHELTERS IN BUCHAREST

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

This report represents the immediate views of the originating intelligence components of the Office of Research and Reports. Comments are solicited.

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INCREASED CONSTRUCTION OF AIR RAID SHELTERS IN BUCHAREST

A November 1957 report from a Rumanian national states that every enterprise and institution in Bucharest has been obliged to build air raid shelters. 1/ Some enterprises had already built them, and others were having them built in the spring of 1957. In other satellite nations, however, it is reported that only large important enterprises are being furnished with substantial shelters and, in view of the cost involved, it seems improbable that every enterprise in Bucharest would have a shelter of the type described by the source.

The source states that these new shelters were of the deep underground type, and were provided with ventilation, toilets, baths, and other facilities. They were apparently intended to be used for periods up to one week at a time. The shelters were covered with reinforced concrete slabs, six to eight feet thick. No information on the thickness of the walls nor on the capacity of these shelters is available. The same source also reported the construction of a very large special shelter south of the Strandul Bragadiru swimming pool grounds between Strada Slt. Marius Dumitrescu and Strada Puisor Intre Sine. This shelter was reportedly covered with a reinforced concrete slab 16 feet thick. Dirt and sod were laid on top of the cover so that only four vents are visible above the shelter.

Two earlier reports from former Bucharest residents, one an architect, have indicated that central Bucharest is honeycombed with a series of underground corridors and shelters. 2/ Specific areas of the city which are thus underlain are the former Royal Palace, the Ministry of Interior, the Cretulescu Gallery, the Dragomir Niculescu block, the University Foundation, and the Excelsior and Stanescu Hotels. The construction of this shelter complex--equipped with modern lighting, plumbing, and ventilation systems--was probably completed at the end of 1956. The second informant contended that this underground construction was to provide the party and government with a stronghold in the event of riot or civil war.

The Ministry of Interior shelter reportedly had an outside measurement of 131 feet by 92 feet. 3/ The sides and top of this shelter were of reinforced concrete, apparently in two layers, with a 10-foot layer of loose sand between them. This shelter, with two underground entrances and an entrance and air vent on top, was completed in 1954.

Other major air raid shelters in Bucharest reportedly are as follows: 4/

1. Opposite the Northern Railway Station under the Railway Management Building--capacity 2,000;
2. Under the National Bank of Lipscani Street--capacity over 500;
3. Under the Adriatica Building on Calea Victoriei--capacity 500;
4. In a residential building for officials of the Casa Economiei si Consigntatiei, Brancoveanu Street--capacity over 500;

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5. On Magheru Boulevard--shelters under the Patria Theater, the Creditul Minier Building, the former Malaxa Building, and the Republica Movie Theater--capacity several hundred each;
6. Near the Railroad Workers Hospital on Grivitei Road.

Shelters with extremely large capacities are reported, by German repatriates, in the northwest suburbs of Bucharest. 5/ One, a civilian shelter, has a capacity of 5,000 to 6,000, and another near the former Malaxa Building would hold 6,000 persons. A large shelter, with a capacity of 3,500 persons, is reported across from the Central Sanitarium--near the end of Calea Vacaresti. This shelter is 52 feet deep, with a ceiling 26 feet thick, and is equipped with electricity, water, ventilation and central heating. Experience indicates that estimates of shelter capacities are sometimes exaggerated.

In addition to this civilian shelter construction, there is some evidence that shelters have been built in and around military installations. Underground shelters have been reported at the Army Hospital Depot, at various antiaircraft battery sites throughout the city, and at locations near the barracks of the Bucharest army garrison. 6/

Because of insufficient data on structural specifications, no firm conclusions can be reached as to the effectiveness of the shelters under nuclear air attack. It seems reasonable, however, to assume that some of the newer ones were designed to withstand severe blast effects. From the number of reports which have been received--including some which have been confirmed by more than one source--it appears that a fairly large-scale shelter construction program has been in progress in the Rumanian capital since 1953.

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